

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 HEW-06
OES-07 IO-14 SS-15 NSC-05 PA-02 ICA-20 /108 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2699

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, IT

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: CATERING SERVICE AT FIUMICINO AIRPORT UNDER
JUDICIAL INQUIRY

1. HEALTH OFFICE AT FIUMICINO AIRPORT (AN OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH) WARNED AEROPORTI DI ROMA, S.P.A. (AR--THE STATE OWNED ROME AIRPORTS GROUND HANDLING COMPANY) ON APRIL 13 TO TAKE, WITHIN 15 DAYS, MEASURES FOR ENSURING ITS CATERING SERVICES ARE CONDUCTED UNDER HYGENIC CONDITIONS. THE HEALTH OFFICE ALSO SENT A REPORT TO THE RESPONSIBLE MAGISTRATE WHO, ON MAY 5, DELIVERED TO AR MANAGING DIRECTOR ERNESTO POSTIGLIONE A "NOTICE OF JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION" TO INFORM HIM THAT AN INQUIRY WOULD BE CONDUCTED ON THE CASE. IN RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE AR, ON MAY 4, SUBMITTED TO THE HEALTH OFFICE A PLAN,,ENTAILING THE EXPENDITRE OF 300 MILLION LIRE (ABOUT \$345,000), FOR RESTRUCTING ITS CATERING PLANT. AR ALSO REQUESTED THE OPINION OF PROF. NRICO MALIZIA, DIRECTOR OF THE ANTI-TOXIN CENTER OF ROME UNIVERSITY, WHO SUBSEQUENTLY DECLARED THAT THE MEALS PREPARED AT FIUMINICNO CONFORM TO THE EXISTING HYGIENIC REQUIREMENTS AND DO NOT REPRESENT ANY HAZARD FOR THE CONSUMERS.

2. AR ALSO PUBLISHED IN MANY ITALIAN DAILIES A NOTICE WHICH POINTS OUT OUT THAT (A) THE CATERING ACTIVITY IS CARRIED OUT UNDER THE CONTINUOUS CONTROL OF THE AIRPORT HEALTH OFFICE AND NO
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PATHOGENIC GERMS HAVE EVER BEEN FOUND IN THE FOOD SAMPLES TESTED BY THAT OFFICE, (B) AR ALWAYS HAS FORMALLY AND SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLIED WITH THE ORDERS RECEIVED FROM RESPONSIBLE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES, AND (C) IT IS A STANDING PRACTICE FOR AIRLINES REPRESENTATIVES TO BE PRESENT AT VARIOUS STAGES OF MEAL PROCESSING. THEREFORE, NOTICE CONTINUED, AR GUARANTEES ITS FOOD IS WHOLESOME AND PREPARATION AND PACKAGING OF MEALS DONE

CAREFULLY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SANITARY REGULATIONS.

3. FEDERATED LABOR UNIONS (CGIL, UIL, CISL) IMMEDIATELY DENOUNCED INACCURACY OF THE PRESS AND ITS TENDENCY TO DISPARAGE AR BY DISSEMINATING UNFOUHD ARLARMS. AFTER ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE CATERING FACILITIES AT FIUMICINO AIRPORT ARE INADEQUATE, THE UNIONS STATED THAT THERE IS NO REASON FOR SCANDAL CAMPAIGN "BASELY FOSTERED BY UNIDENTIFIED GROUPS WHICH WANT TO GET HOLD OF THIS IMPORTANT AND REMUNERATIVE ACTIVITY."

4. CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN AIRLINE GROPUP (CIVI-CONSIGLIO ITALIANO VETTORI IATA) SENT TELEGRAM TO MINISTER OF TRANSPORT LATTANZIO, LARGELY AT BEHEST OF U.S. AIRLINES, EXPRESSING CONCERN BOUT ALARMING NEWS ON CATERING SITUATION WHICH WAS SERIOUSLY INJURIOUS TO REPUTATION OF FOREIGN AIRLINES WITH PREDICABLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THEIR OPERATIONS. TELEGRAM DEMANDED FULL ASSURANCES THAT CONCRETE MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN TO RESTORE CONFIDENCE OF PUBLIC AND REMOVE SERIOUS DISCRIMINATION WITH RESPECT TO ITALIAN CARRIER.

5. U.S. AIRLINE OFFICIAL INDICATED FOREIGN AIRLINES, ALL OF WHICH MUST USE AR CATERING SERVICE WHEREAS ALITALIA HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO KEEP ITS OWN CATERING SERVICE, BELIEVED TELEGRAM TO MINISTER LATTANZIO HAD TO BE SENT BECAUSE OF MANNER IN WHICH EPISODE WAS REPORTED, I.E. NEWS REPORTS USUALLY MADE CLEAR THAT ONLY FOREIGN AIRLINES USED AR CATERING SERVICE.GARDNER
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